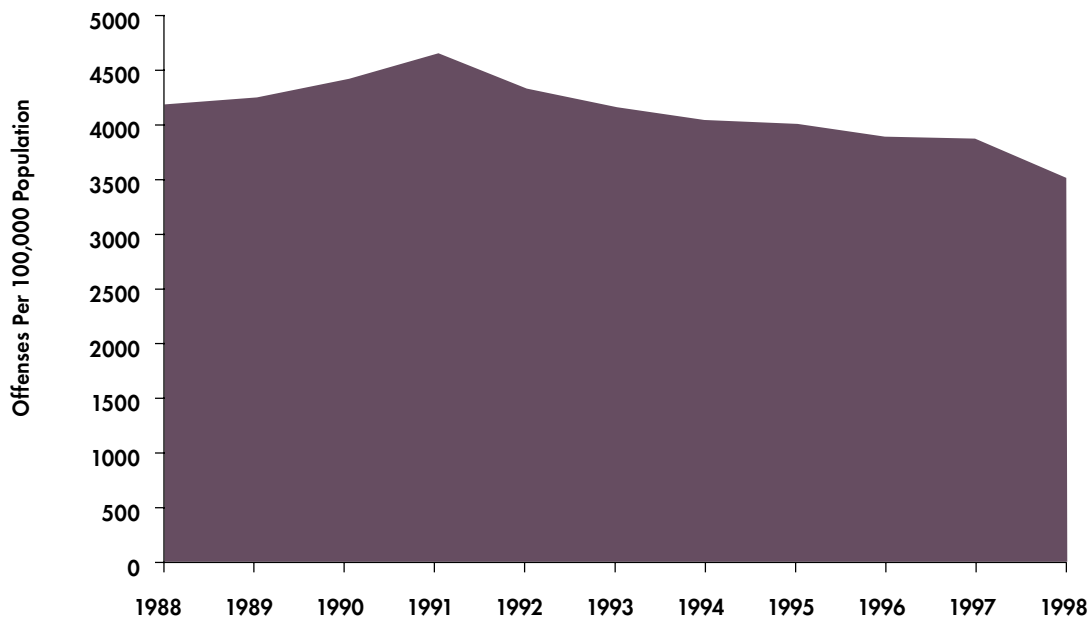


Display 1: Index Crime Offense Rates (1988–1998)

Data Sources: *Crime in Virginia*, Uniform Crime Reporting Section, Virginia Department of State Police; U.S. Bureau of Census and Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service, University of Virginia.

Display 1: Index Crimes Reported in Virginia

Any understanding of crime in Virginia must begin with a basic measure of what types of crimes are occurring and how often they occur. Without this information, public safety policy makers and practitioners cannot develop effective strategies to combat crime in the Commonwealth. In Virginia and most other states, the primary source of this information is the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) system. Statewide UCR information for each year is maintained by the Virginia Department of State Police, which centralizes and compiles UCR crime reports submitted monthly by local law enforcement agencies.

The annual index crime offense rates shown in this display are one of the two basic measures of serious crime in Virginia. The annual rates shown above are the total number of index offenses reported to Virginia law enforcement officials per 100,000 people in Virginia's population. The index crimes include the violent crimes of murder/non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault, and the property crimes of burglary, larceny, and motor ve-

hicle theft*. These crimes are considered representative of overall crime due to their serious nature or to the volume in which they occur.

■ Overall, Virginia's reported index crime rate declined by 16% from 1988 to 1998. The crime rate increased between 1988 and its peak year in 1991, then steadily declined to its lowest point in 1998. The crime rate decreased by 24% from its peak in 1991 to its low point in 1998. The 1998 rate was the lowest rate in Virginia since 1975.

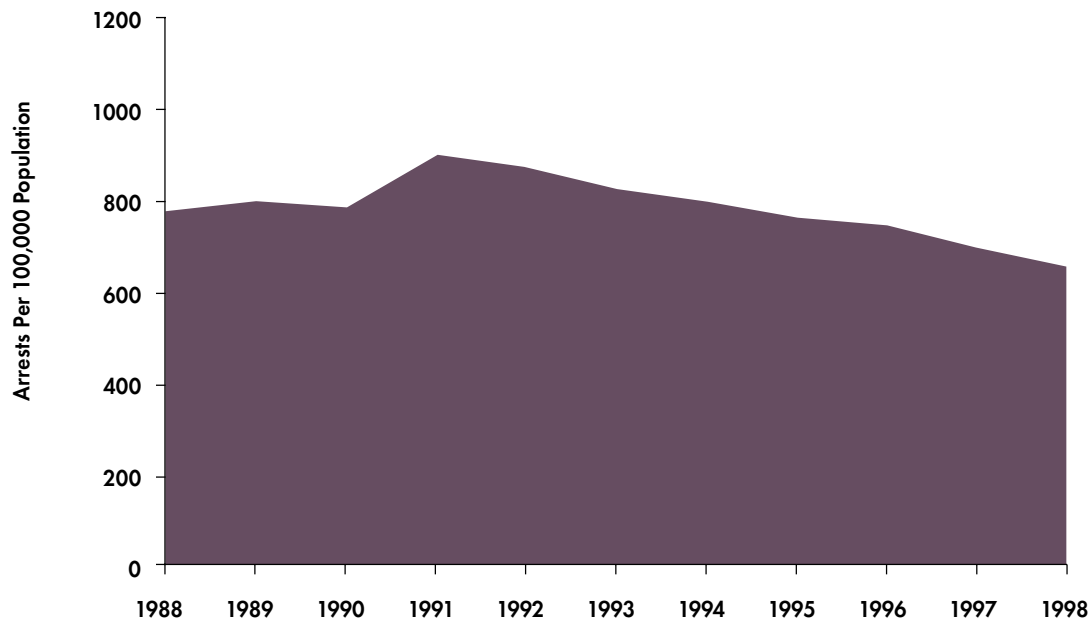
■ In terms of actual numbers of reported offenses, in 1988 there were 250,436 index offenses reported in Virginia. By 1998, this number had decreased to 240,942 offenses.

■ It is important to note that index crimes, although reflecting what are considered the most serious offenses, do not capture all criminal offenses. They do not include drug offenses, weapons possession offenses, simple assaults, economic crimes such as forgery, fraud or embezzlement, and other less serious crimes.

■ Official index crime rates also exclude crimes that occur but which are not reported to authorities. Victimization surveys suggest that many crime victims choose not to report crimes. In some cases, such as rape, victims may wish to avoid reliving the crime during investigative and court proceedings. In cases involving crimes such as larceny, victims may not consider the loss worth reporting or may feel that it is unlikely that authorities will be able to recover their loss.

**Arson is considered an index offense, but due to its nature it is usually excluded from official index crime rate calculations. Therefore, it is excluded from all rates shown in this report other than those shown in Display 15.*

Virginia's 1998 index crime rate was the lowest rate since 1975.

Display 2: Index Crime Arrest Rates (1988–1998)

Data Sources: *Crime in Virginia*, Uniform Crime Reporting Section, Virginia Department of State Police;
U.S. Bureau of Census and Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service, University of Virginia.

Display 2: Index Crime Arrests in Virginia

In addition to the index crime offense rates previously displayed, the other commonly used measure of crime is the index crime arrest rate. This measure, also derived from Uniform Crime Reports data, is the total number of index crime arrests made by law enforcement agencies statewide per 100,000 people in Virginia's population. This display presents index crime arrest rates for each year from 1988 to 1998.

■ The trend for Virginia's index crime arrest rates is very similar to the trend for reported offense rates shown in Display 1. Overall, the arrest rate decreased by 15% between 1988 and 1998. Arrest rates increased from 1988 to a peak 1991, then declined from 1992 through 1998 to reach their lowest point in 1998. The arrest rate decreased by 27% between its peak in 1991 and its low point in 1998.

■ Although the general trend for arrest rates is similar to the trend for offenses reported, the overall arrest rate in each year is much lower than the offenses re-

ported rate. This is because many reported offenses do not result in an arrest, and in some cases a single arrest may be linked to an offender responsible for many reported offenses.

■ In terms of actual numbers of arrests made, there were 54,799 arrests in Virginia for index offenses in 1988. By 1998, this number had decreased by three percent to 53,364 arrests.

■ More detailed examination of arrest data showed that in 1988, 16% of the index arrests were for violent crimes. By 1998, 20% of the arrests were for violent crimes. This may indicate that in recent years law enforcement has been directing more of its efforts toward arresting violent offenders.

■ It is important to keep in mind several factors when interpreting arrest rates. First, arrest rates reflect only crimes for which a person was apprehended. As will be seen in later displays, the frequency with which law enforcement agencies "clear" crimes by making an arrest varies

greatly depending on the type of crime involved. Second, annual arrest figures may include individual offenders who are arrested multiple times in a year or multiple perpetrators arrested for a single offense.

■ Arrest rates may fluctuate as the resources available to law enforcement change. If law enforcement agencies receive resources to deploy more officers to detect crimes and make arrests, arrest rates may increase, even if the number of crimes remains constant. Consequently, arrest rates are sometimes considered more a measure of law enforcement activity in a community rather than as a measure of criminal activity in the community.